

other than the employer's worksite, such as the consultation project offices. It may, under limited conditions specified by the Assistant Secretary, include training and education.

**§ 1908.5 Requests and scheduling for onsite consultation.**

(a) *Encouraging requests*—(1) *State responsibility.* The State shall be responsible for encouraging employers to request consultative assistance and shall publicize the availability of its consultative service and the scope of the service which will be provided. The Assistant Secretary will also engage in activities to publicize and promote the program.

(2) *Promotional methods.* To inform employers of the availability of its consultative service and to encourage requests, the State may use methods such as the following:

- (i) Paid newspaper advertisements;
- (ii) Newspaper, magazine, and trade publication articles;
- (iii) Special direct mailings or telephone solicitations to establishments based on workers' compensation data or other appropriate listings;
- (iv) In-person visits to workplaces to explain the availability of the service, and participation at employer conferences and seminars;
- (v) Solicitation of support from State business and labor organizations and leaders, and public officials;
- (vi) Solicitation of publicizing by employers and employees who have received consultative services;
- (vii) Preparation and dissemination of publications, descriptive materials, and other appropriate items on consultative services;
- (viii) Free public service announcements on radio and television.

(3) *Scope of service.* In its publicity for the program, in response to any inquiry, and before an employer's request for a consultative visit may be accepted, the state shall clearly explain that the service is provided at no cost to an employer with federal and state funds for the purpose of assisting the employer in establishing and maintaining effective programs for providing safe and healthful places of employment for employees, in accord with the requirements of the applicable state or federal

laws and regulations. The state shall explain that while utilizing this service, an employer remains under a statutory obligation to provide safe and healthful work and working conditions for employees. In addition, while the identification of hazards by a consultant will not mandate the issuance of citations or penalties, the employer is required to take necessary action to eliminate employee exposure to a hazard which in the judgment of the consultant represents an imminent danger to employees, and to take action to correct within a reasonable time any serious hazards that are identified. The state shall emphasize, however, that the discovery of such a hazard will not initiate any enforcement activity, and that referral will not take place, unless the employer fails to eliminate the identified hazard within the established time frame. The state shall also explain the requirements for participation in the recognition and exemption program as set forth in § 1908.7(b)(4), and shall ensure that the employer understands his or her obligation to post the List of Hazards accompanying the consultant's written report.

(b) *Employer requests.* (1) An onsite consultative visit will be provided only at the request of the employer, and shall not result from the enforcement of any right of entry under state law.

(2) When making a request, an employer in a small, high hazard establishment shall generally be encouraged to include within the scope of such request all working conditions at the worksite and the employer's entire safety and health program. However, a more limited scope may be encouraged in larger and less hazardous establishments. Moreover, any employer may specify a more limited scope for the visit by indicating working conditions, hazards, or situations on which onsite consultation will be focused. When such limited requests are at issue, the consultant will limit review and provide assistance only with respect to those working conditions, hazards, or situations specified; except that if the consultant observes, in the course of the onsite visit, hazards which are outside the scope of the request, the consultant must treat such hazards as

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though they were within the scope of the request.

(3) Employers may request onsite consultation to assist in the abatement of hazards cited during an OSHA enforcement inspection. However, an onsite consultative visit may not take place after an inspection until the conditions set forth in §1908.7(b)(3) have been met.

(c) *Scheduling priority.* Priority shall be assigned to requests from businesses with the most hazardous operations, with primary attention to smaller businesses. Preference shall be given to the smaller businesses which are in higher hazard industries or which have the most hazardous conditions at issue in the request.

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### § 1908.6 Conduct of a visit.

(a) *Preparation.* (1) An onsite consultative visit shall be made only after appropriate preparation by the consultant. Prior to the visit, the consultant shall become familiar with as many factors concerning the establishment's operation as possible. The consultant shall review all applicable codes and standards. In addition, the consultant shall assure that all necessary technical and personal protective equipment is available and functioning properly.

(2) At the time of any promotional visit conducted by a consultant to encourage the use of the onsite consultative services, a consultation may be performed without delay if the employer so requests and the consultant is otherwise prepared to conduct such consultation.

(b) *Structured format.* An initial onsite consultative visit will consist of an opening conference, an examination of those aspects of the employer's safety and health program which relate to the scope of the visit, a walkthrough of the workplace, and a closing conference. An initial visit may include training and education for employers and employees, if the need for such training and education is revealed by the walkthrough of the workplace and the examination of the employer's safety and health program, and if the employer so requests. The visit shall be

followed by a written report to the employer. Additional visits may be conducted at the employer's request to provide needed education and training, assistance with the employer's safety and health program, technical assistance in the correction of hazards, or as necessary to verify the correction of serious hazards identified during previous visits. A compliance inspection may in some cases be the basis for a visit limited to education and training, assistance with the employer's safety and health program, or technical assistance in the correction of hazards.

(c) *Employee participation.* (1) The consultant shall retain the right to confer with individual employees during the course of the visit in order to identify and judge the nature and extent of particular hazards within the scope of the employer's request, and to evaluate the employer's safety and health program. The consultant shall explain the necessity for this contact to the employer during the opening conference, and an employer must agree to permit such contact before a visit can proceed.

(2)(i) In addition, an employee representative of affected employees must be afforded an opportunity to accompany the consultant and the employer's representative during the physical inspection of the workplace. The consultant may permit additional employees (such as representatives of a joint safety and health committee, if one exists at the worksite) to participate in the walkaround, where the consultant determines that such additional representatives will further aid the visit.

(ii) If there is no employee representative, or if the consultant is unable with reasonable certainty to determine who is such a representative, or if the employee representative declines the offer to participate, the consultant must confer with a reasonable number of employees concerning matters of occupational safety and health.

(iii) The consultant is authorized to deny the right to accompany under this section to any person whose conduct interferes with the orderly conduct of the visit.

(d) *Opening and closing conferences.* (1) The consultant will encourage a joint opening conference with employer and employee representatives. If there is an